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Humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Djibouti

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to official Government figures, there were some 1,450 Ethiopian and 61,500 Somali refugees in Djibouti at the beginning of 1990. In the last quarter of 1990 and early in 1991, new influxes of Somali refugees were reported in the border villages of Ali-Ade, Assamo and Hol-Hol. By May 1991, some 20,000 had been registered. With the escalation of armed conflict in Ethiopia, which resulted in a change of Government in late May 1991, there were large influxes of Ethiopian refugees into neighbouring countries. In the early stages, some 140,000 refugees were reported to have arrived in Djibouti. By mid-June this figure had been reduced drastically to 15,000. The decrease was attributed to spontaneous repatriation. Thus, by the middle of 1991, the estimated refugee population in Djibouti was 97,950. UNHCR has examined the claims of the various groups and considered them refugees. While the Government of Djibouti has not granted formal refugee status to these persons, the authorities continue to assure UNHCR that both Somalis and Ethiopians will continue to enjoy its protection.

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II. ASSISTANCE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS

2. Following the massive influxes from both Somalia and Ethiopia in the first half of 1991, the Government of Djibouti allocated three sites to the Somalis and two to the Ethiopians and appealed to the international community for assistance in establishing refugee reception centres. The mechanism instituted in Djibouti to coordinate assistance to refugees, presided over by UNHCR, assessed the needs and mobilized material and technical assistance in favour of both Somali and Ethiopian refugees. UNHCR responded by making immediately available some $1.8 million from its Programme Reserve and Emergency Fund to meet the basic needs of the refugees for shelter, domesti items and an adequate supply of potable water. Four of the five reception centres were established by mid-June; three for 20,000 Somali refugees and one at Aouar-Aoussa, where about 5,000 Ethiopians were relocated. The World Food Programme (WFP) mobilized a six-month ration for 30,000 Ethiopian and Somali refugees, while UNICEF and WHO provided emergency health-kits and medicines.

3. While assistance continued to be provided, UNHCR was facilitating the voluntary repatriation of refugees. In 1990, some 37 refugees of Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese origin were voluntarily repatriated and 76 others resettled in third countries of asylum. In the first half of 1991, however, UNHCR has facilitated the return of 174 Somalis from Djibouti and some 490 others from the Gulf region. Voluntary repatriation and resettlement opportunities continue to be pursued.

4. UNHCR's revised allocation for its programme in Djibouti for 1991 is estimated at $3,294,900, while projections for 1992 are estimated at $796,100.

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Assistance to voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Chad

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 45/156 of 18 December 1990, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General and concerned organs of the United Nations system to continue their efforts to mobilize the necessary financial and material resources for emergency assistance to voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Chad.

2. This special programme of assistance to voluntary returnees and displaced persons in Chad, which started in January 1987, was adopted as an integral part of the overall response by the international community to the need for recovery and rehabilitation in Chad. The initial programme of nine months was extended several times until 31 March 1989. Since then, funds allocated under the annual programme have made it possible for UNHCR to provide for the needs of returnees from Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and the Sudan.

3. It is estimated that at the end of 1990 approximately 4,000 returnees, of whom 2,500 were from Cameroon, benefited from UNHCR assistance, which covered transport costs and some cash grants. The provision of three months' food rations were covered by the World Food Programme (WFP). The primary objective of the UNHCR assistance package is to encourage Chadians to repatriate while acting as a catalyst in promoting their re-integration in Chad.

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4. During the first five months of 1991, limited repatriation has continued, particularly from Cameroon, where over 2,700 refugees have been repatriated. This operation has been financed under UNHCR annual programme allocations for the countries concerned.

5. Following the political changes that took place in Chad in December 1990, UNHCR had planned to initiate the voluntary repatriation of some 20,000 Chadians at the end of the rainy season in September 1991. Since food stocks in Chad specifically, and the region in general, were low, this time schedule had to be changed. The refugees are currently receiving care and maintenance assistance in three settlements in Northern Darfur, Sudan. It is anticipated that organized repatriation movements will start in the last months of 1991 or early 1992 once there are definitive assurances that returnees will receive a small rehabilitation package consisting of food, seeds and agricultural tools on their arrival in their home areas.

6. Since the closure of the UNHCR Office in Chad, the UNHCR representative in Cameroon has been coordinating the activities of the Office in close cooperation with the UNDP and FAO Offices at Ndjamena.

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Assistance to refugees and returnees in Ethiopia

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 45/161 of 18 December 1990, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue her efforts to mobilize humanitarian assistance for the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of returnees and the large numbers of refugees in Ethiopia.

2. At the end of 1990, Ethiopia was host to 790,000 refugees, comprising 385,000 Somalis in the east and 405,000 Sudanese in the west. The escalation of civil strife in Somalia since late 1990 has generated further influxes of Somali refugees and Ethiopian returnees into Ethiopia, bringing the total number of people receiving UNHCR assistance to 1.2 million as at the end of June 1991: 600,000 Somali and 400,000 Sudanese refugees, and 200,000 Ethiopian returnees.

3. In 1990 UNHCR programmes made progress in consolidating and strengthening relief assistance in both Somali and Sudanese refugees, particularly in the transport, water and health/nutrition sectors. Some 137,600 tons of food were transported and distributed during 1990. By the end of 1990 the malnutrition rate in all camps was under 5 per cent.

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4. These achievements in 1990 were negated, however, by the new influx of more than 200,000 Somali refugees in the first quarter of 1991, following the collapse of the Siad Barre Government in Somalia. UNHCR responded to the influx by mobilizing existing resources available in the country and airlifting emergency relief items. The 1991 budgetary allocation for assistance to 1 million Somali and Sudanese refugees was subsequently revised upwards to $76.2 million. However, the relief operation was again seriously disrupted by the intensified civil strife and the change of government in Ethiopia in late May 1991, causing additional suffering for both refugees and returnees. Many camp facilities, such as warehouses, offices, clinics, staff houses, vehicles and trucks were looted, destroyed and/or burned, and many refugees fled the camps. At the time of writing of the present report (end of June 1991), UNHCR, in coordination with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations was making every effort to re-establish the relief operation in the country.

5. Since the spontaneous return of some 200,000 former Ethiopian refugees from Somalia in early 1991, UNHCR has made every effort to assist the returnee caseload by providing an initial travel grant and a one-month food package to enable as many of them as possible to return to their areas of origin. Owing to insufficient food stocks in the country, UNHCR could not provide provide the initially agreed three-month food package and reintegration grant stipulated in the Tripartite Agreement.

6. In order to alleviate further hardship, UNHCR also tried to encourage as many persons as possible to move away from the Ethiopia-Somalia border. Returnees were found in three different locations: the south, south-east and east. In the south-east (Ogaden), returnees mingled with drought victims, making it extremely difficult to separate the two groups. Pending registration of bona fide returnees, UNHCR will continue to provide food to both the returnees and drought victims in the Ogaden until the situation has stabilized.

7. Since March 1991, some 11,500 returnees in the south and 3,855 returnees in the east have received their initial travel grant and one-month food ration, to enable them to disperse to their areas of origin. Owing to the lack of fuel, food and security in Ethiopia, the initial planning assumptions could not be implemented.

8. A cross-border operation from Kenya to Negele/Dolo and Suftu in the south is under way. Some 12,400 tons of wheat are expected to arrive in southern Ethiopia by the end of July 1991. The first convoy of 400 tons is expected on 4 July 1991. The first airlift of 800 tons of food and relief items to the Ogaden was completed on 1 July 1991. A second airlift of another 800 tons is under-way. As soon as conditions in Ethiopia allow, the remaining food and reintegration packages will be distributed to returnees at their reintegration sites. UNHCR is in close consultation with the World Food Programme (WFP) to make available the food required for distribution.

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Situation of refugees in the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General

1. During the period under review, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was assisting 390,000 of the 780,000 refugees estimated to be in the Sudan. Of the assisted caseload, 370,000 were from Ethiopia and 20,000 from Chad. In addition, an emergency operation was begun to meet the relief needs of nearly 100,000 Ethiopians who arrived unexpectedly during a brief period at the end of May 1991. The new arrivals were mainly young conscripts from all parts of Ethiopia who had fled their garrisons in Eritrea. They were promptly afforded a temporary haven by the Sudanese authorities.

2. At the end of 1990, a survey revealed that the drought and the resulting country-wide food shortages had also affected refugees in the older, well-established refugee settlements where, in normal years, refugees grow most of their own food. Food rations are therefore being provided to all UNHCR-assisted refugees in 1991. This involved a doubling of the food requirements, all of which had to be imported by the World Food Programme (WFP) or received by UNHCR as donations in kind.

3. Despite the need, prompted by the financial crisis, to reduce UNHCR 1989-90 programmes for assisted refugees, the life-sustaining needs of refugees continued to be met. However, the local costs of delivering such

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assistance continued to escalate because of inflation and a very unfavourable exchange rate. The devaluation of 1 May 1991 afforded some relief. It enabled UNHCR to partially offset the effects of inflation as well as to undertake much-needed investments in infrastructure that had been suspended because of the budget cuts in the two previous years.

4. Efforts were continued to reduce refugee dependence on direct assistance in the long term by linking UNHCR assistance, wherever possible, to national development efforts carried out by bilateral donors and the European Community in refugee-affected areas. UNHCR also completed the first phase of a programme to improve infrastructure and services in refugee-affected areas in eastern Sudan with special contributions for this purpose from a major donor. A second phase is to be completed by 1993. A major setback, however, was UNHCR's failure to mobilize its grant contribution of $US 10.2 million in five annual instalments towards the $US 34.4 million South Kassala Agricultural Project implemented in coordination with the World Bank and the Government of the Sudan. At the time of reporting, arrears in the UNHCR payments amounted to $US 5.74 million. As a result, the project had to be redesigned and its scope reduced.

5. Political developments in the region have enhanced the prospects for return movements of Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan. At the time of reporting however, it was too early to anticipate the scale of such a repatriation, should it take place. Because of the drought and the resulting food shortages in their country of origin, the return of Chadians who had requested assistance with their repatriation and rehabilitation in Chad had to be postponed until the end of 1991.

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Emergency humanitarian assistance to Liberian refugees and displaced persons

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 45/139, the General Assembly appealed to organizations of the United Nations system, governmental and intergovernmental bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations, to provide the necessary material and financial assistance for the return and resettlement of victims of the Liberian civil war and further requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue with her efforts to mobilize the additional resources necessary for the rehabilitation of Liberian refugees and displaced persons and to find a durable solution to the problem of Liberian refugees. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

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II. EFFORTS BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM, GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERGOVERMENTAL BODIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE NECESSARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT OF VICTIMS OF THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR

2. The year-long civil war in Liberia caused over 750,000 Liberians to seek asylum in five West African countries: Côte d'Ivoire - 300,000; Guinea - 325,000; Ghana - 10,000; Nigeria - 1,000; and Sierra Leone - 125,000, as well as the internal displacement of another 1.5 million Liberians. Efforts were deployed on the part of the United Nations, through the United Nations Emergency Relief Operations in Liberia (UNSCOL), which started to provide emergency relief assistance to 300,000 persons at Monrovia in December 1990. UNSCOL is mandated to oversee and coordinate all activities pertaining to relief in Liberia, including the provision of financial assistance and the logistical support of the management and technical guidance to over 30 non-governmental organizations involved in the operation.

3. The World Food Programme (WFP) plays its traditional role of supplying food rations for all beneficiaries. Under its regional Emergency Operations (EMOP 4452), 202,026 metric tons of food is planned for 1,350,000 persons in Liberia. Local and international non-governmental organizations handle food distribution; by the beginning of May, the seventh distribution was completed to 778,300 beneficiaries. The eighth distribution, in mid-May, catered to 900,000 displaced persons and returnees.

4. Food donated by WFP and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was distributed in Bomi Hills to an estimated population of 130,000 persons and in Cape Mount county to an estimated 203,000. The distribution is being carried out by Médecins sans Frontières - France (MSF-F) and Lutheran World Service (LWS), respectively.

5. The malnutrition rate has substantially decreased in children 0-5 years in the Monrovia area. Comparative figures from December 1990 indicated that the overall malnutrition rate dropped from 35.4 to 5.1 in April 1991. Severe malnutrition is reported to be 1.7 per cent against 15.8 per cent for the same reference period.

6. The World Health Organization (WHO) operates in the medical field for UNSCOL and supervises the 31 medical institutions opened so far.

7. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Plan International and MSF (Belgium) have finalized plans for the support of up to 30 educational community centres, which will provide a literary and numeracy programme in addition to day-care facilities and counselling. UNICEF is also soliciting $US 300,000 for the rehabilitation of the water and electricity systems. CRS operates as a donor agency by supplying supplementary food such as oil, fish powder, salt, corn soya blend and sugar to vulnerable homes. They also offer logistical support.

8. Although the conditions in Liberia are not yet propitious for the promotion of an organized mass voluntary repatriation, refugees who do so spontaneously are absorbed in the existing United Nations relief activities. United Nations agencies and some 30 non-governmental organizations are continuing emergency relief operations pending a comprehensive needs-assessment mission to all parts of Liberia, which will result in a unified appeal and a concerted plan of action for the relief and rehabilitation of Liberia.

III. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND FINDING OF A DURABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES

9. Immediately after the first wave of Liberian refugees entered Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, the High Commissioner launched an appeal on 21 February 1990 to cover the needs of 143,000 refugees in both countries. Following the influx into Sierra Leone in late May 1990, a second appeal was made on 28 June 1990 to cover the needs of 20,000 refugees in that country. Also, owing to new influxes and increased demands, the updated requirements for Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea were also included for a total amount of $11,326,600. As numbers increased so rapidly a third appeal for $15,930,000 dated 3 September to cover the needs of 490,000 refugees in the three countries (280,000 in Guinea, 150,000 in Côte d'Ivoire and 60,000 in Sierra Leone) was launched. Contributions received towards the appeal were used to provide initial emergency relief assistance under a multisectoral project. By the end of 1990 the total number of refugees attained 750,000.

10. Although the response of the donor community was generous, it was none the less slow. The programme was eventually fully funded at the end of October 1990. As a result, some activities had to be extended into the first quarter of 1991. That undoubtedly affected effective and timely programme delivery. Despite the late funding, the assistance programme for Liberian refugees in all hosting countries was sustained at an acceptable standard. The morbidity, mortality and malnutrition rates were similar to that of the local population.

11. WFP, within the framework of six country-specific and two regional emergency operations, provided 90,470 metric tons of basic food items with $57,328,627 to Liberian refugees and displaced persons. As at 1 August 1990, it also agreed to meet a substantial part of the internal transport and related internal transport, storage and handling (ITSH) to the principal warehouses in the three countries. UNHCR, for its part, contributed 4,348 metric tons of complementary commodities at a cost of $4,563,400 to the refugee relief operations in the three countries. The League of the Red Cross Societies also provided assistance to the National Red Cross Societies in the form of food distribution in the three countries. It also met the cost of that operation.

12. MSF (France) in Sierra Leone and MSF (Belgium) in Guinea provided curative and preventive health services. Refugee children were included within the ongoing national expanded programme of vaccination in all countries. Most of their programmes were funded directly outside the UNHCR appeals.

13. Efforts were made to improve the water and sanitation infrastructure in all countries through funding of borewells, shallow wells and improvement of water sources. Over 100 borewells were sunk and fitted with hand pumps. An education component of the water/sanitation programme sensitized refugees to the need to protect water sources. Materials were provided for the construction of improved pit latrines.

14. As the year-long fighting threatened peace and security throughout the country during 1990, refugees opted to remain in asylum countries until they saw some indication of the situation returning to normal. In view of the dynamism of the population and to prevent dependency, UNHCR made efforts, even during the emergency phase, to provide means, although limited, to encourage self-reliance among the refugees.

15. In October 1990, the UNHCR Executive Committee approved an operational budget of $23,247,000 for refugees under the 1991 general programmes. A revised figure of $27,100,000 was approved at the annual UNHCR target review exercise in May 1991. The assistance base started in 1990 will be consolidated in 1991, with particular attention paid to the promotion of self-reliance and local integration through agricultural and income-generating activities, education and health. All initiatives towards self-sufficiency will be supported. In terms of education, the refugees have organized schools and are teaching on a voluntary basis. UNHCR has provided basic school materials.

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Assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Malawi

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. OVERVIEW

1. Mozambicans have been crossing the frontier into Malawi for years. However, it was not until June 1986 that the numbers increased so much that the Government authorities became concerned. Late in that year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was invited to establish a programme for Mozambican refugees in Malawi as it had become clear that, with the increased influxes, sufficient land for refugees to grow their own food was not available. In certain districts refugees had to be moved to specific areas where a minimal infrastructure was set up. Approximately half the refugees have settled spontaneously in Malawian villages, primarily in the central region, while the remainder live in more concentrated groups in the southern region. As at 31 December 1990, there were 926,725 Mozambican refugees in Malawi. Thus nearly one out of every nine persons in Malawi is a refugee and the impact of the refugee presence on the tiny land-locked country is staggering. The UNHCR assistance programme meets the basic needs of the refugees pending voluntary repatriation - the only durable solution possible for this caseload. The global financial constraints faced by UNHCR, however, led to a cut of some $6 million in the 1989/1990 programmes, although the number of refugees assisted increased by 100,000. As a direct consequence of these funding shortfalls, in 1990 refugees suffered a nutritional deficiency resulting in the outbreak of pellagra (a dermatological disease) in many of the camps in the southern areas of Malawi. There was an increased incidence of waterborne diseases; storage systems proved inadequate; road conditions became poor during the rainy season because of lack of maintenance; and ecological damage and the infrastructure could not be repaired. These developments, which resulted in a deterioration in community services and education, were all direct results of the Office's global financial crisis.

2. All the refugees in Malawi are Mozambicans of rural origin and most of them are illiterate. Many have ethnic ties with the local Malawian populations. A few, however, have received primary education and speak Portuguese.

3. The physical and nutritional condition of new arrivals has been generally comparable to those of the local Malawians. The number of refugees and the assistance required for them are regularly reviewed and necessary adjustments made during the year. The refugees are currently located in 12 of Malawi's 24 administrative districts. The following table, prepared from statistics received from the Government of Malawi, shows the breakdown of the refugee population by district:

District	December 1989	December 1990
Lilongwe	31 228	35 576
Mchinji	9 858	16 563
Nkhata Bay	1 337	2 535
Dedza	160 641	174 544
Ntcheu	152 102	160 374
Mangochi	34 700	38 918
Machinga	17 753	22 873
Mulanje	46 968	47 493
Thyolo	22 000	34 305
Mwanza	35 139	48 652
Chikwawa	49 136	68 336
Nsanje	257 981	276 556
Total	822 503	926 725

II. THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAWI

4. The Government and people of Malawi continue to maintain a generous attitude towards Mozambican asylum-seekers, as they have since the beginning of the influx. Services and facilities are shared equally by nationals and refugees alike. The UNHCR assistance programme is carried out through Ministries of the Government of Malawi and are, where necessary, supplemented by national and international non-governmental organizations.

5. As indicated above, in December 1986 UNHCR was invited to devise a large-scale assistance programme for the refugees. During the first quarter of 1987, the Government and UNHCR signed an agreement for the establishment of a UNHCR presence at Lilongwe. In November 1987 the Government of Malawi ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. In 1988 a Tripartite Commission on Voluntary Repatriation, comprising the Governments of Malawi, Mozambique and UNHCR, was established to facilitate the voluntary and orderly repatriation of those Mozambicans wishing to return home to areas they considered secure. In April 1989 the Malawi Parliament enacted the Refugee Act establishing the Eligibility Committee, its task being to determine the status of individuals seeking asylum. The Commission met twice in 1990 and agreed to establish a Contingency Plan for Large-Scale Repatriation. This Plan was prepared by UNHCR and is currently being shared with the Governments of Mozambique, Malawi and other countries hosting large numbers of Mozambican refugees.

6. The Malawi Red Cross is responsible for the distribution of all relief items. Most of the basic food is provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and supplemented by other donors and UNHCR. In 1986 the Government established the Joint Operations Committee to coordinate the assistance efforts of the various Government departments and agencies. During the last quarter of 1988 an Executive Secretariat to the Joint Operations Committee was established in the Office of the President and Cabinet in order to strengthen implementation of the Committee's directives more effectively.

III. ASSISTANCE

7. As already mentioned, consistent with official policy, the Government has allowed Mozambicans to settle among the local Malawi population. However, as the numbers swelled, it soon became clear that there was not sufficient land for the refugees to grow their own food. As a result of congestion in certain districts, refugees were moved to sites where minimum infrastructure was provided. Approximately half of the refugees have settled spontaneously in Malawian villages in the central region, while the remainder live in more concentrated groups in the southern region.

8. More than one out of every nine persons in Malawi is a refugee and the impact of their presence on the land, services and resources of the country is staggering. The sectors most affected by budget cuts are food (i.e. sugar, salt), storage, education, non-food items (i.e. blankets, buckets, cooking pots, clothing), community programmes, construction, road maintenance, reafforestation and water (well-digging).

A. Food

9. During 1990 as before, significant logistical and procurement problems continued. Buffer stocks could not be established. The WFP coordinated the supply of most basic food commodities, while UNHCR purchased additional basic, supplementary and therapeutic food. Approximately 180,000 tons of food were required during the year. The basic ration scale for 1990 was as follows:

	(Grams per day)
Maize flour	400
Pulses	60
Oil	30
Sugar	20
Salt	05

Note: Not all food commodities at the ration level indicated are currently available.

B. Health

10. Under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Health and with support from Médécins sans Frontières (MSF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the American Refugee Committee (ARC) and UNHCR, this sector provided health care to refugees and their Malawian neighbours. Lack of groundnuts contributed to a nutritional deficiency (pellagra), which at mid-year had affected almost 15,000 refugees. This condition was later gradually reversed with the reintroduction of groundnuts to priority areas in August 1990.

C. Water and sanitation

11. The target of one water point for every 750 persons in camps and areas hosting large numbers of refugees was nearly attained in 1990. Deep well boreholes, shallow wells and springs were constructed or rehabilitated. This task continued to be coordinated through the Malawi Water Department and was reinforced by Save the Children Fund (United Kingdom) which has established training programmes for handpump maintenance and shallow well-digging. Over 38,000 family latrines were built during 1990.

D. Domestic needs

12. The financial shortfall has made this sector heavily dependent upon donations from non-governmental organizations. Blankets, clothing, cooking sets, water containers and soap were provided from various local and international non-governmental organizations as well as UNHCR. The supply of these domestic items was not considered adequate and some remained scarce.

E. Shelter and other infrastructure

13. The planning, opening and supplying of new sites with basic infrastructure was carried out under this sector. New arrivals were given poles to construct their dwellings and latrines, while assistance in the form of tarpaulins and plastic sheeting was provided for the construction of transit shelters in reception centres to accommodate new arrivals temporarily until more permanent structures could be built by the refugees themselves.

F. Community services

14. Refugee participation was again emphasized while social welfare and assistance was provided through the Ministry of Community Services. The Social Welfare Unit of that Ministry was responsible for implementing rehabilitation programmes for the disabled, services to the aged, child-care services (including pre-school and unaccompanied children), recreational activities and counselling. The Community Development Unit provided services

in home economics, income-generating activities, adult literacy, self-help activities and leadership training. During the past year, a UNESCO vocational training consultancy has established the groundwork for activities in this area. Lack of resources in this sector resulted in insufficient training and supervision of field staff and a dependency upon the scarce resources of non-governmental organizations for a wide range of social welfare and community development activities.

G. Education

15. By the end of the year, over 80,000 refugee students were enrolled for primary education in 76 schools taught by nearly 700 refugee teachers. Directives for educational activities continued to be provided jointly by the Governments of Malawi, Mozambique and UNHCR. In this sector the financial crisis led to fewer classrooms being constructed than required. Training programmes for many new teachers were also severely curtailed. Although minimal educational supplies and equipment were made available, teaching was seriously hampered because of delays in the supply of textbooks from Mozambique.

H. Crop production/livestock/animal husbandry

16. Owing to the shortage of land, it was virtually impossible for refugees to integrate with the local community and became self-sufficient. Activities in this sector were designed to assist refugees in pursuing a range of small agricultural activities, which, in some instances, were intended to supplement basic diets, while gradually decreasing their reliance on external assistance. Veterinary services continued to be provided by the Ministry of Agriculture as in previous years. The Ministry concentrated on vaccination programmes and the upgrading of dipping and other pest control sites for those refugees who had fled with their animals.

I. Forestry

17. The impact of nearly 1 million refugees on the country is most evident in the ecological damage found in the areas hosting refugees. Hectare after hectare has been denuded by the enormous demand for fuel for cooking and shelter. During 1990, over 1,300 hectares were planted with 2.5 million seedlings raised under agreements with the Forestry Department. Funds were also given to the Forestry Department for the production of efficient fuel wood stoves in order to retard the deforestation process.

IV. CONCLUSION

18. The only durable solution available for this caseload is voluntary repatriation to the country of origin under conditions of safety and dignity. As mentioned above, the global financial situation over the past two years, coupled with similar funding shortfalls experienced by WFP, resulted in mid-1990 in a nutritional difficiency among many of the camp-based refugee populations in the southern areas of Malawi. Furthermore, these cuts have seriously affected UNHCR's capacity to provide basic assistance in most districts. They have undermined the Office's capacity to deliver basic care and maintenance, to contribute to community services, education and infrastructure, or to compensate for the ecological destruction arising from refugee presence. These reductions cast doubt on the international community's commitment to assist the Office to discharge its statutory responsibilities efficiently. Women and children, in particular, have suffered both physically and psychologically as a result.

19. To alleviate this situation it is incumbent on the international community to contribute generously to and supplement the UNHCR Annual Programme for Malawi. In 1990, for example, a trust fund donation during the second half of the year made it possible to purchase groundnuts to combat the pellagra situation. Without this donation, the situation would surely have led to more unnecessary suffering and perhaps death. Although this disease has been contained, additional funding, both in cash and in kind, is required to cope with a continuously increasing refugee caseload.

20. This report would be incomplete if mention were not made of the severe impact the presence of the refugees has had on the developmental potential of the Government and people of Malawi. This fact was highlighted in the World Bank consultative group meeting in Paris in 1990. It is therefore strongly recommended that the international community should be encouraged to support Malawi's efforts to develop its infrastructure, in particular, its roads and forests, and its health and educational services.

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Assistance to student refugees in southern Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

1. As in previous years, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has continued in 1990 and 1991 to organize and implement programmes for educational and other appropriate assistance - mainly for South African and Mozambican refugees in the southern African region and elsewhere. The aim of this assistance is to provide the young refugees with the basic education and skills to enable them to be productive and self-reliant in their countries of asylum and to increase their potential to assume leadership roles upon their eventual repatriation.

2. Following the mass repatriation operation, which took place between June 1989 and June 1990, UNCHR activities on behalf of the Namibian students were virtually discontinued. A group of 2,266 Namibian students in Zambia was assisted beyond the closure of the repatriation operation, to allow them to complete the school year in Zambia. They were subsequently repatriated in December 1990/January 1991. The UNHCR educational programmes were designed mainly for South African and Mozambican students who remained in their countries of asylum and were targeted at the primary and secondary levels. However, UNHCR continued to provide financial assistance to refugee students of other nationalities at higher post-secondary educational levels. Assistance at this level for South African refugees continued to be funded by the United Nations Education and Training Programme for South Africa under the Agreement of Understanding between that Office and UNHCR.

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* A/46/150.

3. The educational assistance programmes were implemented either directly by UNCHR offices in the respective countries, or through other agencies. Some 19,100 refugee students (of South African, Mozambican or other nationalities) in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe were supported at primary, secondary and vocational levels. In Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, some 42 students of various nationalities were sponsored for study at the university level, which will continue through the 1991/92 academic year.

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International Conference on Central American Refugees

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Since July 1990, the date of the earlier report on this subject, progress has continued in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/139 of 15 December 1989 relating to the International Conference on Central American Refugees.

2. At the First International Meeting of the Conference's Follow-up Committee, which took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in June 1990, a Declaration was adopted (A/44/527, Corr.1, annex). In its resolution 45/141 of 14 December 1990 the General Assembly requested "the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme to continue their support to the affected countries in the implementation of the Concerted Plan of Action, especially through the activities of the Joint Support Unit". In addition, generous pledges of financial support were announced for the 59 projects of the Conference identified as priority activities by the five Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua), Belize and Mexico.

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* A/46/150.

3. In the 12 months since the meeting of the Follow-up Committee, the efforts of UNHCR, in cooperation with UNDP, have been directed at the implementation and funding of projects that attracted donor support, while attempting to secure the necessary resources for the remainder. As at March 1991, a total of 33 of the 59 priority projects had actually been partially or totally financed, including 11 projects implemented through UNHCR on behalf of refugees or returnees. In the context of the International Conference on Central American Refugees, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of some 45,000 refugees in 1990, mainly to El Salvador and Nicaragua. This repatriation trend has continued in 1991, albeit on a somewhat reduced scale. At the same time, local integration efforts in countries of asylum (Belize, Costa Rica and Mexico) are supported through Conference projects.

4. In the framework of the Conference other solution-orientated initiatives that address the needs of uprooted populations have also attracted donor support. In addition, the Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees, a region-wide inter-agency programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, including UNHCR, is also under way. The Programme aimed at the social and economic integration of uprooted populations in Central America and Belize. UNHCR has appointed a staff member to the Programme's Central Team at Guatemala City and has initiated activities foreseen under a region-wide programme for the promotion and dissemination of refugee law and human rights principles, in support of programmes of the Development Programme and in furtherance of the Office's own regional objectives under its Mandate. Implementation by UNHCR of specific components of national subprogrammes of the Development Programme is also under way.

5. As provided for in the Concerted Plan of Action in favour of Central American Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons (CIREFCA/89/14), and in line with resolution 44/139, emphasis continues to be placed on the various mechanisms for follow-up and promotion of the International Conference on Central American Refugees. At the international and regional levels, the Follow-up Committee, comprising representatives of the Governments of the five Central American countries, Belize and Mexico, continues to play a key role in consensus-building, in analysing priority needs to be presented to donors and in evaluating the current status of the Conference as the situation in the region evolves. Under the chairmanship of the Vice-Minister for External Affairs of Honduras, the Follow-up Committee has met twice within the region during the first six months of 1991. At its April 1991 meeting at San José, Costa Rica, the Committee not only reiterated its adherence to the objectives of the Conference, but also agreed to enhance the involvement of donors, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations in its process. Most recently, the Committee met at San Pedro Sula, Honduras, from 17 to 19 June 1991, an event marked by the decision to hold a second international meeting of the Follow-up Committee in March 1992, at a location still to be determined. The next regular meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place in August 1991.

6. Further support for the objectives of the Conference was expressed at the forty-first session of the UNHCR Executive Committee in October 1990. Diplomatic support for the Conference on the part of the Central American countries has been underscored at every presidential summit in the region since Esquipulas II and, most recently, at Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico, in January 1991. In addition, the Final Communiqué of the March 1991 meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Central American countries and the members of the European Community, known as San José VII, expressed firm support for the Conference process.

7. At the national level, national coordinating committees have been established in three of the seven countries, with the aim of formulating project proposals and promoting regular coordination and dialogue between the various agencies involved in the implementation of Conference projects. A key goal in this respect is to foster the participation of national planning/economic ministries in the national committees in order to ensure the incorporation of Conference projects into national development plans.

8. In another provision of the Plan of Action, national committees were given the option of establishing support groups, comprising national authorities, donors, UNDP and UNHCR, to serve as forums for regular dialogue on all aspects of the Conference. At present, support groups are functioning in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. On a more informal basis, regular meetings with donors are scheduled at the national level to review funding priorities.

9. In the past year there has also been evidence of the increasing level of involvement of non-governmental organizations in the Conference process, particularly through the activities of the Regional Association of Non-Governmental Organizations Working with Refugees, Displaced Persons and Returnees, an organization of Central American non-governmental organizations. This organization will hold its second international conference in July 1991, at Managua, with the aim, inter alia, of evaluating progress in the implementation of the Conference Plan of Action.

10. Inter-agency collaboration between the specialized agencies and organs of the United Nations system is also crucial for the Conference's effort. In recognition of the interrelation between the objectives of the Conference and the regional peace initiatives set in motion by the 1987 Esquipulas II Agreement, the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, UNDP and UNHCR established the joint task force, an ad hoc body for high-level discussions and strategy formulation regarding the Conference and associated diplomatic initiatives having an impact on the region. The most recent meeting of the joint task force took place in May 1991 at UNHCR headquarters.

11. The respective efforts of UNHCR and UNDP in supporting implementation of the Conference Plan of Action continue to be centred in the work of its Joint Support Unit, which is funded and staffed by both organizations and based at San José, Costa Rica. The Joint Support Unit is entrusted with the task of providing technical and financial support to the follow-up activities of the

seven countries, through UNHCR and UNDP offices in the region. A significant achievement of the Joint Support Unit during the past year has been the establishment of a data bank to facilitate analysis of progress in project implementation.